

Dear New Brighton Families,

I want to thank you for your continued patience, flexibility, and support during these trying times. We are all navigating uncharted waters, and we will best get through them together. Please know, every day, our driving force is the safety of our students and families. Every decision we make is with this at the forefront. I would like to update you on two events that are scheduled for the spring season.

Each year, 8th graders look forward to a trip to Washington, D.C. This year's trip is scheduled for May 27-29. There is significant uncertainty surrounding travel restrictions and the effects of the pandemic now and in the future. We were recently contacted by the tour company and their recommendation is to cancel the trip. My decision to follow that recommendation is a result of a number of factors. First, at this time there is no certainty about when our lives will return to normal, nor when our cities will return to work. Second, we cannot guarantee that attractions in and around the nation's capital would not remain closed or severely limited in access. Lastly, and one of the most important considerations, is that at this time the tour company believes they can retrieve nearly a full refund of payments. The Washington, D.C. trip is a considerable investment for our families and the opportunity to not make additional payments and receive a substantial refund of past payments, pending a release of those funds by the tour company, is in everyone's best interest. I understand the disappointment that our 8th graders will experience because of this decision, but I sincerely believe it is the most prudent.

This time of year also brings with it the excitement and festivities associated with the Prom. This annual tradition is not only looked forward to by students, but families, and the entire New Brighton community as well. The current guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) state that there are to be no groups larger than ten (10) for 8-weeks. This guidance was given on March 13 so is effective until May 8. Since the Prom is scheduled for May 1, I have made the very difficult decision to cancel the Prom. It goes without saying, that for many students the Prom is a highlight of their entire school career and that there will be significant and understandable disappointment. I, too, am saddened and my heart goes out to our students, particularly the Class of 2020, who I'm sure were anticipating this event with great excitement. I also recognize that the Prom is a significant expense to students and their families, so I have tried to make this decision as far in advance as possible to respect families' financial investments. We have coordinated with our vendors and most are willing to cancel our contracts due to this unforeseen situation.

It is with a heavy heart that I share this information today. School is about so much more than academics; it is also about friendships, experiences, and memories. I hope we can all help our disappointed students understand that in these unprecedented times there are things that are simply beyond our control. It is my hope that in cancelling these events we can keep our community safe and healthy, and also save families from expenses that cannot be refunded. Once again, thank you for your support and understanding as we work together these coming days.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Guarino, Ed.D.
Superintendent